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ABSTRACT

This lesson plan asks students to use documents from "California As I Saw It: First Person Narratives, 1849-1900," in the American Memory Project to create a script depicting the motivations, expectations, fears, and realizations of immigrants who settled California between 1849 and 1900. According to the lesson plan, "California As I Saw It" consists of the full texts and illustrations of 190 works documenting the formative era of California's history through eyewitness accounts--the collection covers the dramatic decades between the Gold Rush and the turn of the 20th century. The plan intends for the student's finished product to be a "hypertext," an online written dialogue, containing links to illustrative written materials, images, and sound file from the American Memory collections. It first presents an overview and a sample hyperscript. The lesson plan contains a "student page" with explanatory information, including educational objectives, sources required, dramatic elements required, and project stages. It also contains a "teacher page" which outlines objectives; gives time required, discusses curriculum fit; lists resources; details a step-by-step procedure for the lesson's classroom implementation; and discusses extension and evaluation. (NKA)

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The Learning Page... lesson plans

Links to the Past: Creating Hypertext Dialogues Drawn from Narrative History Collections.

By

Colette Richardson and Steve Davidson

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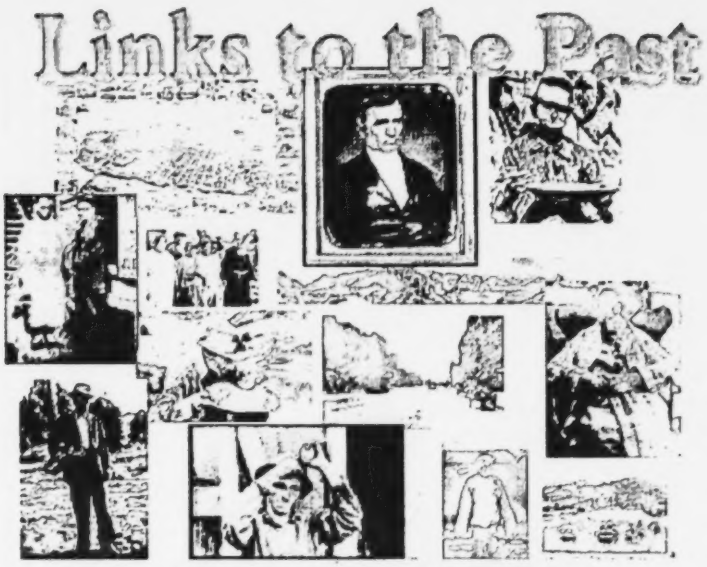

Early California History Hyperscripts
annotated with artifacts from the
American Memory Collection

Creating Hypertext Dialogues Drawn from Narrative History Collections

Colette Richardson and Steve Davidson
California

Students use documents from California As I Saw It: First Person Narratives, 1849-1900, in American Memory to create a script depicting the motivations, expectations, fears, and realizations of immigrants who settled California between 1849 and 1900. The finished product will be a hyperscript, an online written dialogue, containing links to illustrative written materials, images, and sound files from American Memory collections.

Teacher | Student

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"California as I Saw It"
First-Person Narratives of California's Early Years, 1849-1900

General Collections and
Rare Book and Special Collections Division

Search By Keyword | Browse Index of Authors | Subjects | Titles

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"California as I Saw It:" First-Person Narratives of California's Early Years, 1849-1900 consists of the full texts and illustrations of 190 works documenting the formative era of California's history through eyewitness accounts. The collection covers the dramatic decades between the Gold Rush and the turn of the twentieth century. It captures the pioneer experience; encounters between Anglo-Americans and the diverse peoples who had preceded them; the transformation of the land by mining, ranching, agriculture, and urban development; the often-turbulent growth of communities and cities; and California's emergence as both a state and a place of uniquely American dreams. The production of this collection was supported by a generous grant from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation.

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Special Presentation
Early California History: An Overview

Understanding the Collection

About the Collection

California Regional Map:
Large (500k jpg) | Small (80k jpg)

Additional Resources

Further Readings

Working with the Collection

How to View text | illustrations

Digitizing the Collection

Copyright and Other Restrictions

Acknowledgments

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Links to the Past:

Sample Hyperscript

Searching for Stories of Success: A Play in One Act

Cast:

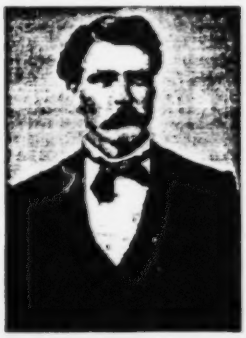
Jacques Antoine Moerenhout--***Counsel to the French Government***

Moerenhout has traveled to California on a fact finding mission. He is reporting his findings on California, in particular the Gold Rush, in regular letters to the French government. Moerenhout is a tall man, around thirty-five years old, and is always dressed very formally, almost inappropriately so. He pays constant attention to his hair and clothes, which suffer from the heat of the Sierra Nevada mountains in summer. He speaks very little English and is constantly followed by his translator, with whom he contracted when he arrived in San Francisco.

Jacques Antoine Moerenhout.

Solomon Weathersbee Downs--***Interpreter to Monsieur Moerenhout***

Mr. Downs is originally from Boston, Massachusetts. He has been in California for a little over one year, having been lured by the promise of riches in gold. Soon after arriving, however, he quickly realized that the strenuous life of a miner was not for him. He presently lives in San Francisco and makes his living as a tutor for wealthy families. He has left a wife and two children back in Boston, and is trying to save up enough money for the voyage back to the east coast.



Solomon Weathersbee Downs.

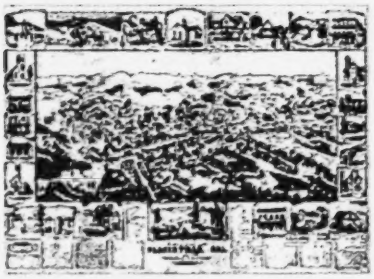
John Stone--***Miner who has come from upstate New York to stake his claim***

John has been working for about eight months panning for gold with little luck. At first, he had been able to send a few flakes of

gold to his wife, but that was many months ago. He has not heard from his family since he arrived in California, but he has sent many letters to them. His goal now is not to get rich, but rather to make enough money to go home.

John Stone.

Place:



Placerville, California.

Scene: An outdoor scene in downtown Placerville. Visible on stage is the train depot, with regular departures and arrivals for Sacramento.
Also visible is the front porch of the general store, where miners buy their supplies.

As the curtain rises, a banjo can be heard playing a traditional song. On the stairs to the general store, John Stone can be seen sitting at a barrel and staring off into the foothills of the Sierra Nevada with a distant look on his face.

Jacques and Solomon enter from stage right. Jacques is dictating his observations to Solomon who is frantically trying to write them all down in his notebook.

Jacques: *(in French)* As I was saying, the most striking thing about California is the majestic beauty. The coastline is quite spectacular. The natural beauty alone would be enough to draw people to this area, let alone the gold. Why sailing into the Golden Gate was breathtaking! However, upon my arrival in the port of Yerba Buena, I found that almost two thirds of the residents had dropped everything to find gold in the Sierras. Clearly the lust for gold motivates these Americans.

Solomon: *(frantically)* Sir, if you could only talk slower. I can't quite seem to get all this down.

Jacques: What I really want to find is someone who has struck it rich, who has gone from being penniless to becoming wealthy overnight. I hear a lot of talk about it but have yet to meet one soul who has had it happen to himself.

As they are talking, they approach John Stone on the steps to the general store. He can be heard quietly singing the refrain from a song, over and over.

John: *(singing)*
I'm bound to California mines,
For who would work from morn to night

And live on hog and corn,
When one can pick up there at sight
Enough to buy a farm.
O California! that's the land for me...

Jacques: Mr. Downs, what is that miner singing about?

Solomon: Well sir, it is a song about coming to California and striking it rich.

Jacques: Mr. Downs, that man is exactly the type of person I need to talk with. Let us approach him.

The two men approach John.

Solomon: Sir, may we have a word with you?

John: Hey, I haven't done anything wrong!

Solomon: No, no, sir, it is nothing like that. This gentleman, Mons. Moerenhout, is a Counsel with the French government. He is collecting information on why people have left their homes in such numbers to head out for California. May he have a word with you?

John: Why, I guess it's all right. I don't have anything else to do, Lord knows.

The following conversations are translated between Jacques and John by Solomon.

Jacques: Sir, I have heard much talk about men striking it rich, but have yet to meet one. Have you made your fortune? Are you glad you came?

John: No, I should have never left. I have a wife and two girls back home. Every week I send a letter promising them that the next one will have some money or gold flakes in it. I don't even have the money to return home. How I miss seeing my little girls. This was a mistake.

Jacques: *(one eyebrow higher than the other, as if he were trying to extract some secret from ole' John)* I was told that the gold in these parts was found in the size and shape of flakes. The discovery of a platinum mine is also spoken of, perhaps in the Sacramento Valley?

John: *(with downcast, sad eyes)* I can only say that there have been several people have come from that place with some quantities of gold. Yes, sir, that is true. I hope to be the next lucky man. I really do.

Jacques: *(thinking out loud and in French)* My deductions tell me that an average of the product of a days work is usually 30-50 francs.
(now in English) How do *these* men do it! On my way here, John, everywhere the women have been left alone, even in the most isolated farms. Doesn't that concern you?

John: Look man, I am scared to hell of what is going on with my wife and children. But, I'm here for them, *(voice rising to a high-pitched scream)* DON'T YOU GET IT!

Jacques: I'll come back later. I didn't mean to upset you.

John: Why am I wasting my time talking to you two? I should be back up at the creek panning. Today may be my lucky day. *(He gets up to leave.)*

Jacques quickly moves to stage right with Solomon .

Jacques: The desperation witnessed here is astounding. There is so much hopelessness and at the same time so much faith that these hills hold the answers to all of these pathetic people's prayers. Everything is left behind at a moment's notice to pursue a dream. Many of these poor souls only find worthless rocks or if they do find something it is not nearly enough to make up for what has been sacrificed. Yet, they continue to come. Perhaps, John ole' boy was right. I just don't get it!

Prospector Panning for Gold.

Sources:

- *A letter from a gold miner*, Placerville, California, October, 1850, with an introduction by Robert Glass Cleland.
- *The inside story of the gold rush*, by Jacques Antoine Moerenhout . . . translated and edited from documents in the French archives.

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Links to the Past:

Student Page

What is a Hyperscript?

A hyperscript is a dramatic script with a cast of characters, a scene description, and a dialogue, in the form of an HTML document that displays as a Web page. What makes a hyperscript different than a regular written script is that at relevant places, it contains hyperlinks to other Web pages that further illustrate the events or themes being discussed in the script.

In this project, you will write a script using HTML and will illustrate your script by linking to documents, photographs, maps, movies, and sound recordings in American Memory. Your links will illustrate the motivations, expectations, fears, and realizations of settlers who came to California between 1849 and 1900. You may view a sample hyperscript, the first ever created.

Objectives

- Research California As I Saw It, 1849-1900, in American Memory and identify primary sources that illustrate the motivation, expectations, fears, and realizations of settlers in California from 1849-1900.
- Develop and implement search strategies that effectively locate primary sources that are relative to specific inquiries.
- Search photographic, text, film, and audio collections in American Memory.
- Create a hypertext script ("hyperscript") with links to photographic, textual, and audio collections in American Memory that depict the experiences of early settlers in California from 1849-1900.

Sources Required

The following are the minimum source requirements (you are encouraged to use as many as you find relevant):

- Four references and links to textual narratives from California As I Saw It, 1849-1900 that depict the motivations, expectations, fears, and realizations of the settlers.
- Four links to relevant images from American Memory collections of photographs, paintings, drawings, maps, etc.
- Two links to relevant sound files from California Gold: Northern California Folk Music from the Thirties or to motion pictures from American Memory.
- Print out all American Memory documents, images, and their **bibliographic records** that you have chosen to link to in your hyperscript.

Dramatic Elements Required

1. ***Scene Description:***
   Include time period, geographic location, stage setting, and background. Include at least one link to an illustrative photograph or print from American Memory.

2. ***Character Description:***
   Include at least two characters. Include physical characteristics, age, gender, personality characteristics, and clothing for each character in the cast.

3. ***Author's Note:***
   Complete the script with a note explaining how the selected links to American Memory illustrate the motivations, expectations, fears, and realizations of settlers in California during this time period.

Project Stages

1. Locate all source artifacts to be used, including documents, photographs, sound recordings, etc. You will have three class periods to complete your research. Printouts of bibliographic records are assembled and turned in by the first due date.
2. Write script. This is assigned as homework.
3. Turn in the first version of script as a word-processing file by the second due date.
4. Write hyperscript. You will have three class periods to complete your hyperscript.
5. Your hyperscript must have:
   - Four links, relevantly placed, connecting your script to textual documents found in *California As I Saw It, 1849-1900*. Each of the four links should provide an example of one of the four "themes" identified in the answers to the following questions:
     1. Why did people leave their homes to come to California?
     2. What did they expect to find in California? How did resettlement change their lives?
     3. What fears did they have about the journey and their lives once they got there?
     4. Was their experience what they had expected? If not, how was it different?
   - Links to at least four images found in American Memory that relate to the subject matter of your script.
   - Links to at least two sound recordings or motion pictures found in American Memory that relate to the subject matter of your script.
   - Links from the thumbnail images that you have used in your hyperscript to a larger version of the same image.
   - Links from the captions of the images that you have used in your hyperscript to the image's bibliographic record.
6. Turn in final hyperscript by the third due date.

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Links to the Past:

Teacher Page

Students use documents from California As I Saw It: First Person Narratives, 1849-1900, in American Memory to create a script depicting the motivations, expectations, fears, and realizations of immigrants who settled California between 1849 and 1900. The finished product will be a hyperscript, an online written dialogue, containing links to illustrative written materials, images, and sound files from American Memory collections.

Objectives

After completing this unit students will be able to:

- Explore *California As I Saw It, 1849-1900* and identify primary sources that illustrate the motivations, expectations, fears, and realizations of settlers in California from 1849-1900.
- Develop and implement search strategies that effectively locate primary sources relative to specific inquiries.
- Search photographic, text, and audio collections in American Memory.
- Create a hypertext script (hyperscript) with links to photographic, textual, and audio collections in American Memory.

Time Required

Seven class periods of 45-60 minutes each

Recommended Grade Level

United States history and government, grades 9-12; California history, grades 6-12

Curriculum Fit

Local History; American history sections on immigration and westward expansion; social and cultural history

Resources Used

American Memory

- California As I Saw It, 1849-1900
- California Gold: Northern California Folk Music from the Thirties

- History of the American West, 1860-1920
- *American Memory* Motion Picture Collections
- *American Memory* Photograph and Print Collections

Learning Page

- Linking and Bookmarking Items in American Memory
- Places Pathfinder
- Technical Information Page

Print Sources

- Kim, Elaine, and Eui-Young Yu. *East to America: Korean American Life Stories*. New York: New Press, 1996.
- Unger, Irwin, and Debi Unger. *The Times Were a Changin': The Sixties Reader*. New York: Three Rivers Press, 1998.

Materials

- Sample Hyperscript
- Student Page

Procedure

Lesson 1: Why Immigrate to California? (1 class period)

Lesson Preparation

1. Select four excerpts of personal narratives describing the experience of modern immigrants to California. These narratives can be drawn from a variety of historical and contemporary sources:
   - Stories of Asian immigration to the San Francisco Bay Area (such as those found in Elaine Kim's *East to America: Korean American Life Stories*);
   - Accounts of migration to the Bay Area in the 1960s by people seeking political and cultural freedom (examples may be found in Irwin Unger's *The Times Were a Changin': The Sixties Reader*);
   - Recent accounts of people coming to Silicon Valley as part of the new "digital gold rush" found in contemporary news sources.

2. Print out copies of the four selections for distribution.

Classroom Activity

1. Explain that the class will be reading accounts of personal experiences of contemporary immigrants to California, and later, personal narratives of earlier settlers who immigrated to California in the period 1849-1900.

2. Explain to the students that in reading these personal accounts, they will be seeking answers to the following questions, which are applicable to emigrants during the Gold Rush, the 1960s, and the recent "digital gold rush." These questions relate to four "themes": the immigrants' motivations, expectations, fears, and realizations:
   1. Why did people leave their homes to come to California?
   2. What did they expect to find in California? How did they expect resettlement to change their lives?
   3. What fears did they have about the journey and their lives once they got there?

4. Was their experience what they had expected? If not, how was it different?

3. As a class, brainstorm keywords/adjectives that demonstrate the four themes identified in these questions. Have one student record the results of the brainstorming session.

4. Provide students with copies of excerpts from the four contemporary narratives.

5. Students will spend the remainder of the period reading the excerpts from the narratives to answer the questions and identify the four themes. For each of these themes, students will highlight one piece of evidence found in the text.

6. Using the questions provided above, the students will explain in a journal entry how the evidence they have discovered in the text reveals the immigrants' motivations, expectations, fears, and realizations. (This assignment may be completed as homework.)

Lesson 2: Searching for Sources (3 class periods)

Lesson Preparation

1. Compile the results of the classroom brainstorming session and create a list of useful keywords for searching. Prepare a printed handout with these keywords.

2. Print out copies of the Student Page and Sample Hyperscript for classroom distribution.

Classroom Activity

1. Demonstrate the basic search features of American Memory. Show students the differences between a keyword, subject, and title search in order to maximize their results. Show students how to compile a "bookmark" or "favorites" file to collect and organize their research results.

   Note: Linking and Bookmarking in American Memory under Technical Information on the Learning Page explains how to link and bookmark American Memory items. Orientation on the Learning Page offers tips on searching.

2. Provide students with copies of the handout giving useful keywords for searching.

3. Using the search strategies developed in the previous classroom activity, students will search California As I Saw It, 1849-1900 for at least four documents depicting the motivations, expectations, fears, and realizations of settlers who immigrated to California between 1849 and 1900.

4. After selecting four documents from California As I Saw It, 1849-1900, students will search all American Memory collections for related pictures, movies, maps, and sound recordings to illustrate their script.

   Note: Check the Places Pathfinder under Orientation on the Learning Page for relevant collections.

5. By searching American Memory, students can find the following items for linking to in their finished hyperscript:
   - Four references from personal narratives in *California As I Saw It, 1849-1900* demonstrating the four themes (motivations, expectations, fears, and realizations);
   - Four related images from American Memory; and
   - Two related motion pictures or sound recordings from American Memory.

   IMPORTANT: Have students print out the bibliographic information page for each of these items from American Memory for later use in assembling their script.

6. Provide students with printed copies of the Student Page and the Sample Hyperscript and explain the homework assignment, writing the script.

Homework: Writing the Script

After searching the collections and locating relevant documents in *California As I Saw It, 1849-1900*, students write their scripts. Initially, the script will be written in a word-processing program. Students should keep in mind the texts, images, motion pictures, and sound recordings that they have selected from American Memory and indicate the points in the text where these items will be linked.

Using the Sample Hyperscript as a guide, students construct a dramatic scene that includes the following elements:

1. *Scene Description*
   Students should include the scene's time period and geographic location, a description of what is visible on stage, and a physical description of the characters and their clothing. This component should contain at least one link to an illustrative photograph or print from American Memory.

2. *Characters*
   Students should include at least two characters in the dialogue.

3. *Author's Note*
   Students should write a paragraph at the end of their dialogue to explain how the links they have selected illustrate the motivations, expectations, fears, and realizations of settlers in California during the time 1849-1900 period.

Lesson 3: Creation of Hyperscript (3 class periods)

Offline Version:

Teachers who do not have access to HTML authoring software for their students to produce hyperscripts may choose to have them produce printed scripts using the following procedure:

1. Students use printouts of the online documents instead of using online versions.
2. Students produce a printed script, highlighting text where a link would be placed in an online version and writing an identifying number at the end of the sentence or next to an image. The number corresponds to the attached printout of the document.
3. As a final product, students compile a packet containing the script with highlighted text and printouts of the four relevant documents.

Online Version:

Lesson Preparation

Print out copies of Linking and Bookmarking in American Memory and Saving Media in American Memory under the Learning Page's Technical Information Page.

Classroom Activity

1. Students bring their completed script on a disk to class.

2. Explain to students the basic elements of an HTML document and demonstrate the basic commands of the HTML authoring program you will use.

3. Students cut and paste the text of their script into a blank page of an HTML authoring program.

4. Using the Sample Hyperscript (both paper copy and online version), show the students how their finished hyperscript will appear. The instructor may choose to follow another type of layout, if desired. The Sample Hyperscript is suggested as a standardization because of its readability.

5. Students convert their written script into a hyperscript using the HTML authoring program they have learned. Conversion may take place partly in class and partly as homework.

6. Demonstrate to the class how to insert images into an HTML document using the HTML authoring program.

7. Students insert the images that they have selected from American Memory in relevant locations in their hyperscript and place appropriate captions below each image.

8. Go to the Learning Page's Technical Information Page:
   - Linking and Bookmarking has directions on how to create a permanent link to an American Memory document.
   - Saving Media explains how to save the various media files to your computer.

9. Students select relevant portions of text from their script to link to relevant American Memory documents, pictures, sound, and movie files.

10. Carefully following the directions for creating permanent links to American Memory items, students create the following links within their HTML script (Hyperscript):

    - Four links, relevantly placed, connecting their script to textual documents found in *California As I Saw It, 1849-1900*. Each of the four links should provide an example of one of the four themes identified in the answers to the questions:

      1. Why did people leave their homes to come to California?
      2. What did they expect to find in California? How did they expect resettlement to change their lives?
      3. What fears did they have about the journey and their lives once they got there?
      4. Was their experience what they had expected? If not, how was it different?

    - Links to at least four images found in American Memory that relate to the subject matter of their script.

    - Links to at least two sound recordings or motion pictures found in American Memory that relate to the subject matter of their script.

    - Links from the thumbnail images that they have used in their hyperscript to a larger version of the same image.

    - Links from the captions of the images that they have used in their hyperscript to the image's bibliographic record.

Extension

The lesson may be extended by performing the students' hyperscripts or printed scripts. In addition, students may research and create printed materials for distribution to the audience that provide further historical background and details.

Evaluation

Upon completion of the hyperscripts, students can evaluate other students' products. Each student assesses a hyperscript produced by one of their peers, by answering the following questions:

1. Does the hyperscript illustrate the four themes provide examples.
2. Are all of the links relevant to the story presented? Are any of the linked items anachronistic?
3. Is the script interesting to read? If not, what suggestions would you make?
4. Compare the experiences of the characters in the hyperscript with that of more recent immigrants and emigrants to California. How are they similar? How are they different?

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